

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 VANCOU 01309 01 OF 02 161846Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04  
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /085 W  
----- 031883 /44

R 161730Z DEC 76  
FM AMCONSUL VANCOUVER  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3222  
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMCONSUL CALGARY BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL HALIFAX BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL MONTREAL BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL QUEBEC BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL TORONTO BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL WINNIPEG BY POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 VANCOUVER 1309

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, CA  
SUBJECT: BRITISH COLUMBIA: QUEBEC SEPARATISM

1. SUMMARY: THE VAST MAJORITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS, DESPITE SHARP DIFFERENCES WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND PM TRUDEAU OVER MATTERS OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONCERN, ARE STRONGLY NATIONALISTIC. BRITISH COLUMBIANS ARE CANADIANS FIRST. THEY DO NOT WANT TO SEE QUEBEC SEPARATE FROM THE CONFEDERATION IF ANY REASONABLE ACTION CAN PREVENT THAT DECISION. THEY ARE PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH OTTAWA TO THAT END, BUT THEIR SUPPORT HAS LIMITS. END SUMMARY.

2. HISTORICALLY, BRITISH COLUMBIA, LIKE WESTERN CANADA IN GENERAL, HAS VIEWED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS BEING RATHER INDIFFERENT TO ITS PROVINCIAL ASPIRATIONS. BRITISH COLUMBIANS BELIEVE THAT THEIR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 VANCOU 01309 01 OF 02 161846Z

CONCERNS ABOUT BUREAUCRACY AND INEFFICIENT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND ABOUT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE TO THEM--E.G. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY, A FREIGHT TARIFF STRUCTURE WHICH DRAWS NATURAL RESOURCES EASTWARDS AT LOW RATES AND RETURNS MANUFACTURED GOODS WESTWARDS AT HIGH PRICES, TAXATION POLICIES WHICH PENALIZE RESOURCE INDUSTRIES IN RELATION TO MANUFACTURING

FIRMS--ARE PAID TOO LITTLE ATTENTION IN OTTAWA WHERE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN OVER-INFLUENCED BY ONTARIO AND QUEBEC. UNDER THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT, BRITISH COLUMBIA OF MOST PERSUASIONS ARE CONVINCED THAT QUEBEC HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES FOR AN ENHANCED ROLE IN CONFEDERATION AT THE EXPENSE OF WESTERN STATES. THE TWO-LANGUAGES POLICY, FOR EXAMPLE, IS PERCEIVED AS AN OVERT MANIFESTATION OF QUEBEC'S POWERFUL INFLUENCE IN OTTAWA AND FOR THAT REASON, PLUS THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING THE NATION, PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU HAS HIMSELF BECOME A FOCUS OF CONTENTION IN B.C. AT THE SAME TIME, THE QUEBEC ELECTION RESULTS SHARPLY JOLTED BRITISH COLUMBIANS AND INTERJECTED A NEW UNEASINESS INTO THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE FUTURE AND OF THE ABILITY OF THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS TO COPE WITH THE MYRIAD OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THEM. WHILE B.C. VIEWS AS TO WHAT IS TO BE DONE ABOUT QUEBEC, AND HOW, ARE STILL AMORPHOUS, WE HAVE TRIED TO IDENTIFY THE MAIN THEMES OF PUBLIC OPINION.

3. A DISTINCTLY MINORITY VIEW ON THE QUEBEC QUESTION IS THE ONE HELD BY SCATTERED SECESSIONIST FRINGE GROUPS, SUCH AS THE COMMITTEE FOR WESTERN INDEPENDENCE, WHOSE RALLYING CALL IS THAT SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL UNITY IN CANADA ONLY MEANS CONTINUED ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL EXPLOITATION OF WESTERN CANADA FOR THE GREATER BENEFIT AND GLORY OF EASTERN CANADA. ALWAYS SEEKING LEVERS TO BOOST GENERALLY LACKLUSTER SUPPORT, SUCH GROUPS HAVE WAVED THE RED FLAG OF BILINGUALISM (AN ISSUE ESPECIALLY ATTRACTIVE TO BIGOTS AND RACISTS) AND ARE NOW EXPLOITING QUEBEC'S SEPARATIST MOVEMENT BY CLAIMING THAT FRENCH CANADA IS DEMONSTRATING THAT INDEPENDENCE IS A FEASIBLE GOAL FOR THE WEST AS WELL. THIS FRINGE ELEMENT IS A VERY SMALL MINORITY AND NOT SIGNIFICANT.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 VANCOU 01309 01 OF 02 161846Z

4. A SECOND VIEW, NEITHER EXPRESSED NOR ADVOCATED BY THE MEDIA OR RESPONSIBLE BRITISH COLUMBIANS, AND BELIEVED TO BE NOT AT ALL REPRESENTATIVE OF A MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC AT THIS TIME, REMAINS, HOWEVER, VERY NEAR THE SURFACE IN B.C. EXPRESSION OF THIS VIEW QUICKLY TUMBLED OUT OF THE MOUTH OF HUMAN RESOURCES MINISTER VANDER ZALM AFTER THE QUEBEC ELECTIONS WHEN HE SAID HE COULDN'T CARE LESS IF QUEBEC SEPARATED FORTHWITH. (BENNETT QUICKLY DISASSOCIATED HIS GOVERNMENT FROM THE "PERSONAL" OPINIONS OF HIS "VERY COMPETENT" MINISTER.) THIS VIEW HAS ALMOST CERTAINLY BEEN FOSTERED BY A RESENTMENT IN THE WEST AGAINST THE FEDERAL BILINGUALISM POLICY, A POLICY WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC. PREMIER BENNETT, WHILE HE HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THE "FAIRNESS" OF BILINGUALISM AND AGREED TO THE CONCEPT OF TWO LANGUAGES "AS FAR AS CANADA IS CONCERNED," HAS VOICED POPULAR ATTITUDES WHEN STATING THAT WESTERNERS DON'T LIKE MONEY BEING WASTED ON AN "INEFFECTIVE" PROGRAM AND THAT BILINGUALISM HAS "LITTLE APPLICATION" IN B.C. AND SHOULDN'T BE "FORCED" ON PEOPLE. A VANCOUVER SUN EDITORIAL MAY BE CITED AS A REASONED B.C. VOICE ON

THIS MATTER. IN ESSENCE, IT STATED THAT CANADA IS NOT DIVIDED OVER THE PROBLEM OF BILINGUALISM, BUT OVER THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROBLEM AND THE SENSE OF URGENCY AND CRISIS ABOUT THE LANGUAGE WHICH PM TRUDEAU HAS FOSTERED. FOR BRITISH COLUMBIANS, THE QUESTION HAS NO URGENCY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FREQUENT ASSERTION THAT DANGER CONFRONTS THE COUNTRY BECAUSE OF THE FRENCH-ENGLISH QUESTION IS DEEPLY RESENTED. PARADOXICALLY, THERE IS SOME INCREASED SUPPORT FOR FRENCH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN GREATER VANCOUVER AND AN APPRECIATION OF THE ADVANTAGES IT MAY AFFORD FROM STANDPOINTS OF ECONOMICS AND EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT.

5. DESPITE QUARRELS WITH EASTERN PROVINCES AND OTTAWA, THE VAST MAJORITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE CANADIANS FIRST AND FOREMOST (THIRD VIEW). THEY ARE KEENLY INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF THEIR COUNTRY AND IN AN IDENTIFIABLE PLACE IN IT FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA SO THAT WHAT BRITISH COLUMBIANS CONSIDER TO BE THEIR SPECIAL WAY AND QUALITY OF LIFE MAY BE PRESERVED. B.C. HAS THUS A CERTAIN AFFINITY WITH SOME OF THE AIMS AND GOALS OF QUEBEC.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 VANCOU 01309 01 OF 02 161846Z

PRIOR TO THE QUEBEC ELECTIONS, PREMIER BENNETT, WHEN COMMENTING UPON TRUDEAU'S GLOOMY SPEECH TO ONTARIO LIBERALS IN EARLY OCTOBER (IN WHICH TRUDEAU SAID CANADA'S FUTURE WAS IMPERILED BY ENGLISH CANADA'S GROWING RESENTMENT TOWARDS QUEBEC AND BY THE GROWING SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN THAT PROVINCE), REFLECTED A HOPEFUL B.C. OPINION WHEN HE EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT CANADA IS STRONG AND HAS A BRIGHT AND ASSURED FUTURE, THAT THERE IS NO ANTAGONISM TO FRENCH CANADIANS, AND THAT BILINGUALISM IS A MATTER OF "FAIRNESS," BUT HAS NO APPLICATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. THE PARTI QUEBECOIS VICTORY, HOWEVER, BROKE THAT FACILE ASSURANCE AND MATERIALLY ALTERED THE CONFEDERATION EQUATION. THE VANCOUVER SUN STATED AT THE TIME THAT "THE REST OF CANADA, ESPECIALLY THE WEST, SIMPLY CANNOT TAKE FOR GRANTED THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF QUEBEC WITHIN A GREATER CANADA. ENGLISH-SPEAKING CANADA NO LONGER HAS THE 'LUXURY' OF TESTY INTOLERANCE TOWARD CONCESSIONS TO QUEBEC OR OF A WEARY LET-THEM-GO ATTITUDE. MUCH OF THAT ATTITUDE WAS CONDITIONED BY A DELUDED ASSURANCE THAT QUEBEC WOULD NOT LEAVE.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 VANCOU 01309 02 OF 02 161931Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04  
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /085 W

----- 032464 /44

R 161730Z DEC 76  
FM AMCONSUL VANCOUVER  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3223  
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMCONSUL CALGARY BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL HALIFAX BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL MONTREAL BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL QUEBEC BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL TORONTO BY POUCH  
AMCONSUL WINNIPEG BY POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 VANCOUVER 1309

6. IN AN EFFORT TO LEAD PUBLIC OPINION ALONG POSITIVE LINES, PREMIER BENNETT HAS SOUGHT TO EMPHASIZE HIS OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE "IDEA" OF CANADA AND NATIONAL UNITY: "WE LOOK FORWARD TO COOPERATING WITH ALL PROVINCES IN CANADA IN BUILDING A STRONGER COUNTRY. IN ADVOCATING BRITISH COLUMBIA'S POSITION FIRST, THAT MAKES US NO LESS CANADIAN. I'M A CANADIAN AND ALWAYS WILL BE, AND WE'LL WORK FOR A STRONG CANADA AND THAT INCLUDES NOT JUST BRITISH COLUMBIA BUT THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC." IN A RECENT TORONTO SPEECH, HIS FIRST MAJOR PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN EASTERN CANADA, PREMIER BENNETT INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE REAL DANGER TO CANADA WAS AN OVER-REACTION TO THE THREAT OF SEPARATISM, THAT THE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF THE THREAT IS ECONOMICS, AND THAT THE P.Q. WIN IN QUEBEC, AS INDEED HIS OWN SOCRATED UPSET IN B.C. LAST YEAR, ONLY "REFLECTS A RETURN TO THE GRASS ROOTS" AND A DIS- ENCHANTMENT WITH A DISTANT AND GROWING GOVERNMENT (IN OTTAWA);  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 VANCOU 01309 02 OF 02 161931Z

"CANADA IS THE MOST OVERGOVERNED AND UNDERSERVICED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD." PREMIER BENNETT SUGGESTED THAT ADOPTION OF A NEGATIVE INCOME TAX WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE WEAPON AGAINST QUEBEC SEPARATISM AND VOICED THE CONVICTION THAT QUEBEC SEPARATISTS WOULD NOT SUCCEED IF OTTAWA WOULD CEDE GREATER POWERS TO THE PROVINCES, ALLOWING THEM TO DEVELOP INDIVIDUAL DESTINIES WITHIN THE CONFEDERATION FRAMEWORK.

7. MOST THOUGHTFUL BRITISH COLUMBIANS, FERVENTLY HOPING THAT A WAY CAN BE FOUND TO PREVENT QUEBEC'S SEPARATION AND EXPECTING A POSITIVE STATESMAN-LIKE B.C. DECLARATION ON QUEBEC'S PLACE IN THE NATION, FOUND THE PREMIER'S VIEWS ON THE STATE OF CONFEDERATION

AND QUEBEC SIMPLISTIC AND SHALLOW. THE VANCOUVER SUN EDITORIAL OF DECEMBER 1 WELL ILLUSTRATES THE CONCERN HELD WHEN IT SAID THAT IF A GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME PROVIDED THROUGH A NEGATIVE INCOME TAX WERE ALL THAT WAS NEEDED TO KEEP QUEBEC IN THE CONFEDERATION, THEN FEW CANADIANS WOULD BE UNWILLING TO PAY THE PRICE. THE EDITORIAL CHASTIZED BENNETT FOR FLIPPANCY IN ATTRIBUTING THE PQ WIN TO MERE ECONOMICS, NOTING THAT THE REAL ISSUE IN QUEBEC IS THE PROVINCE'S SEARCH FOR IDENTITY AND THAT SUCH WON'T BE FOUND UNDER A PILE OF GREENBACKS. "QUEBEC ASPIRATIONS DESERVE MORE UNDERSTANDING THAN PREMIER BENNETT REVEALED IN HIS TORONTO SPEECH."

8. OUTLOOK: WHILE BRITISH COLUMBIAN'S VIEWS ON QUEBEC ARE DISTORTED AT THE EMOTIONAL LEVEL BY THE INTENSITY OF THEIR DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND WITH PM TRUDEAU WHO IS SEEN AS THE LEADER OF "FRENCHIFICATION" OF THE COUNTRY, B.C. ALSO RECOGNIZES A POSSIBLE ALLY IN QUEBEC FOR GAINING A MORE DECENTRALIZED CONFEDERATION IN WHICH B.C. MIGHT BETTER SUCCEED IN ITS ASPIRATIONS FOR GREATER AUTONOMY AND PRESERVATION OF ITS UNIQUE QUALITIES. THERE IS ONE VERY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE, HOWEVER, BETWEEN THE TWO PROVINCES. B.C. DEVOUTLY BELIEVES THIS GOAL CAN BEST BE ACHIEVED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ONE CANADA AND IS, THEREFORE, DEEPLY OPPOSED TO SEPARATISM. BRITISH COLUMBIA, THEN, IS A POTENTIALLY STRONG SUPPORTER OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO KEEP QUEBEC IN CONFEDERATION BUT ONLY WITHIN LIMITS. B.C., LIKE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 VANCOU 01309 02 OF 02 161931Z

OTHER PROVINCES, WILL CAREFULLY WEIGH THE COSTS--ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL--OF STEPS TAKEN TO KEEP QUEBEC IN THE CONFEDERATION. IF SEEN AS TOO HIGH, B.C. WOULD JOIN RANKS WITH OTHER STATES TO MAINTAIN A CANADIAN CONFEDERATION MINUS QUEBEC. PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS MATTER IS CONSOLIDATING SLOWLY AS THE PROVINCE FOLLOWS PQ MOVES AND LOOKS FOR SIGNS FROM THE LEADERSHIP IN OTTAWA, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE A COMMON BELIEF THAT AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF CANADA OR ITS PEOPLE. INCREASED PRESSURE ON BENNETT TO PROVIDE STRONGER LEADERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL DEBATE ON QUEBEC CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE B.C. BODY POLITIC. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE QUEBEC PARTICIPANTS IN LAST WEEK'S MEETING IN OTTAWA OF FINANCE MINISTERS, WHERE QUEBEC BLATANTLY SUGGESTED THAT ACQUIESCENCE TO PQ DEMANDS, ON THE ONE HAND, MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS BRIBERY BY THE REST OF CANADA TO SECURE QUEBEC'S CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN CONFEDERATION AND THAT RESISTANCE TO THOSE DEMANDS, ON THE OTHER HAND, COULD ENHANCE SEPARATIST SENTIMENTS, WAS WIDELY REPORTED BY THE VANCOUVER MEDIA. THE PROVINCE, IN STRONG EDITORIAL REACTION, STATED OTTAWA AND THE PROVINCES SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR TO QUEBEC IMMEDIATELY THAT SUCH "GAMES" WILL NOT BE PERMITTED, THAT QUEBEC SHOULD UNDERSTAND IT CANNOT AUTOMATICALLY WORK OUT AN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION WITH THE REST OF CANADA IF IT SEPARATES, AND THAT IF A NEW CONFEDERATION IS TO BE WORKED OUT, IT MUST WORK FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL OF CANADA. "OTHERWISE, THE PQ MUST BE FOUGHT TOOTH AND NAIL TO PREVENT IT

DESTROYING A CANADA WHOSE INTEGRITY IS VITAL EVEN TO THE VAST  
MAJORITY IN QUEBEC."  
LUPPI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REPORTS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, POLITICAL SITUATION, SELFDETERMINATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ellisoob  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976VANCOU01309  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760463-0613  
**From:** VANCOUVER  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761235/aaaabebf.tel  
**Line Count:** 280  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 6  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ellisoob  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by ellisoob>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BRITISH COLUMBIA: QUEBEC SEPARATISM  
**TAGS:** PINT, CA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006